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THOMAS CRAWFORD;

HIS

CAREER, CHARACTER, AND WORKS.

A Eulogy,

BY

THOMAS HICKS, N. A.

READ BEFORE THE CENTURY CLUB IN NEW YORK, ON TUESDAY
EVENING, JANUARY 26, 1858.

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At the regular monthly meeting of the Century, held at the Club House, November 7th, 1857, Mr. T. P. Rossiter announced the recent decease of Thomas Crawford. At the instance of Messrs. C. M. Leupp, and O. S. Strong, a committee was appointed, of which Dr. Thomas Ward was Chairman, to report appropriate resolutions, and to invite some member of the Club to prepare a discourse in commemoration of the artist. On the evening of December 5th, 1857, the Committee reported a series of resolutions, and announced that Thomas Hicks had accepted an invitation to deliver the Address, which he accordingly read before the members of the Club and their friends, on Tuesday evening, January 26th, 1858.



E U L O G Y .

CENTURY after century the ocean washes its shores. Dashing in foam against the rocks, or rising with graceful line up the sands, it breaks and recedes. Sometimes the long monotony is interrupted by wreck and loss of life, and we recognize the omnipotence of a merciless element. So Death constantly leads away its victims, tearing the bloom from the cheek of health, and hushing for ever the voice of wisdom and friendship. Nature with her endless variety of life and light, darkness and decay, moves onward ; and suddenly we are startled and cast down in sorrow ; nations and individuals are common mourners, for a great calamity has fallen upon the world !

Thomas Crawford was born in the City of New York, March 22d, 1813, and died in London on the 10th of October, 1857. When the news of his death reached Rome, a meeting of the artists was held,

composed of Italians, Germans, French, English, and Americans, at which Mr. Terry and Mr. Freeman, his early associates in Rome, were the officers. After appropriate resolutions had been adopted, Mr. Gibson, the venerable and distinguished English sculptor, spoke of Crawford's genius in the most unqualified language, and the next day wrote to Mr. Terry the following letter :

" ROME, Nov. 5, 1857.

"DEAR MR. TERRY:—Among the many fine works which our late much lamented friend Crawford has left to this country, I think his model of the Indian is his best work.

"After his death, I began to think what compliment his friends and countrymen could pay to his memory; and it struck me that his model of the Indian might be cast in bronze, and placed in some fine public hall, where the people could see it close to the eye—there to stand as a monument to the author, an American sculptor of great genius, who distinguished himself at Rome for many years. I remain, dear Mr. Terry, truly yours.

"JOHN GIBSON."

The career of this eminent man is instructive and worthy of commemoration from two points of view—from the high position he achieved and sustained in his art, and the genial relationship he bore among his fellow-men; as a man of genius, before whose industry and perseverance no obstacle could stand, and a father and friend whose fidelity and love were one unbroken stream of usefulness and enjoyment;

an artist whose name has now become historical; a man whose frank and ardent heart burned in sympathy with every generous impulse.

There is a similarity in the lives of all great men. They are cast in finer moulds; they are moulded in finer clay; and while boyhood is yet in its tingling ardor, restless with exuberant health and spirits, the natural bias of superior intellectuality is shown, and literally the boy is father of the man. Mozart, when four years of age, had learned, almost voluntarily, to play complicated music on the harpsichord; and the drawings of the shepherd boy Giotto attracted the attention and excited the surprise of the serious Cimabue, whose pupil he became. The boyhood of Crawford exhibited a similar precocity under less fortunate circumstances. The atmosphere which Mozart breathed was one of music; and the genial influences of religion and art charmed into perfection the graceful genius of Giotto. Crawford was born in a new country, at a period when painting was confined almost exclusively to portraiture—when sculpture as a fine-art was unknown, or was only struggling into rude shapes in the stonemason's shop. Without the force of example, and with surrounding circumstances adverse and ungenial, he showed an appreciation of form, and was constantly seeking the means to carve it into expression. The

divine spark was thus kindled, to burn brighter and brighter to the close. Still it was his good fortune to have a sister some years older than himself, whose cultivation and taste aided in the development of his mind, and whose virtues gave to his moral character the high tone and purity from which it never swerved.

From nine to fourteen years of age, his mind was incessantly occupied with drawing and sketching. For these occupations his lessons were neglected, and when he was not engaged with water colors, tinting some engraving according to his fancy, the print and picture auctions offered a feast which he could not withstand. He was so determined in his course, and made such progress, that he was placed regularly at a drawing-school, and the hours not engaged there were spent wherever engravings and other works of art were to be seen or sold. The time now arrived when he must engage in some employment, but he obstinately refused to accept the common occupations of store boy or office clerk, and the habit of watching the carvings of ornaments for churches and other buildings was so absorbing, that he placed himself with a wood-carver in preference. Thus the talent with which nature had endowed him was leading him to that particular branch of art in which he became so dis-

tinguished. He then believed, as he said, that if he could learn the use of the tools he could "create something beautiful." His talent was developed with wonderful rapidity, and soon outgrew the limit to which wood-carving restricted it. He carried on, at the same time, a study of architecture, and in the reading necessary to this study he became more and more familiar with the great architects and sculptors of Greece and Rome. A little while ago his leisure hours were passed looking at pictures and engravings; now every moment in which he was not at work he pored over the biographies of those great artists. Stimulated by their renown, the works they had accomplished, and the esteem in which they were held by contemporary greatness, his ambition to do great and noble things was awakened, and he passed from carving in wood to works in marble. We next find him, at the age of nineteen, in the studio of Messrs. Frazee and Launitz, monumental sculptors in this city. He had already gotten together a collection of casts, among which was one from that noble work of Thorwaldsen's, the "Triumph of Alexander." He had also entered the schools of the National Academy of Design, and his student-life was fairly commenced.

A sense of justice and fairness began now, more strongly than ever, to mark his character. He asked

his employers to pay him more for his labor, and as they treated his demand with less consideration than he thought it deserved, on the following day he did not return. After several days' absence, Mr. Launitz began to think strangely of it, and as he was passing through Elm street, he saw Crawford at work in the shop of his former employer carving ornamental woodwork. He approached him and asked him what it meant? Crawford replied, that he had refused to pay what his labor was worth, and what the carver was ready to pay. "Tut tut," said Launitz, "come back to me, Crawford, and I will give you what you want," and the next day found him again at work in marble. He showed the greatest taste in modelling flowers, leaves, and other natural objects of beauty and grace. He also composed for his master several monumental designs, and worked upon portrait busts, among which was that of Mr. T. H. Perkins of Boston, for the Athenæum, and that of Chief Justice Marshall.

The idea of going some day to Rome had existed in his mind as a vague probability—a dream around which clustered splendid associations. The destiny of genius was with him, and under the influence of his determined will, this vague dream became a reality. Launitz, who was now his fast friend, had discovered his persevering industry,

taste, and facility as a workman, and urged him to go to Rome, where he could study the great works.

In the spring of 1835, preparations were made for his departure; he took leave of his parents, and his sister, who had watched him with such appreciating tenderness; and accompanied by his friend, went to the vessel. The only voice to say good-bye, and the only hands to shake, were those of Launitz; other hearts were sad, and eyes were moistened by tears, but no group of friends stood on the wharf with parting adieus as the little brig moved out of Burling slip, while from amid the strange, rough faces of sailors and stevedores beamed that of Launitz, who waved his hand, and with cheering voice, cried: "God bless you, Crawford!" The voyage was tempestuous. The vessel was a small merchantman, and bound to the port of Leghorn. For twenty days Crawford was sick in his berth; he had a brave heart, and although he had but little money, he carried with him two letters which were to him more than gold; one was to Dr. Paul Ruga, a practical man, to put him in the way of doing every thing economically; and the other was to Thorwaldsen, introducing him as a young American who desired to study sculpture. These, with a volume of Jacob Faithful, were given to him by Launitz. He

arrived at Leghorn; thence to Civita Vecchia; thence over the Campagna to Rome.

We may conceive the young artist's feelings as he drew near to the Eternal City. This idea, which had been but a few years before only a speck on the horizon of his imagination; which he had watched afar off, at morning, noon, and twilight, and which, in his doubts and fears, had seemed to recede further and further from his vision, was after all no dream. But who shall depict the emotions which throbbed in his head and heart when, after the delay before the Porta Cavallegieri and the surrender of his passports, he passed, for the first time, the forest of columns; crossed the Piazza; looked back upon the colonnade and façade of the Church, surmounted by statues; and over all, towering into the very heavens, the dome and cross of St. Peter's? On they whirled to the Castle of St. Angelo, from the bridge of which he saw the Bernini statues flame out against the sky. The diligence dragged slowly up the narrow streets, and he was in the heart of Rome—the first American sculptor who had come to study her manifold treasures, and to build a home and fame amid them.

He had an active temperament and an eager mind. Wherever churches, pictures, statues, or whatever else pertained to his art were to be found, his enthusiasm led him. Scarcely pausing to eat or

sleep, he hurried from Monte Cavallo to St. Pietro in Vincoli and the Capitol. In the long galleries of the Vatican

“He lingered poring on the memorials
Of the World’s Youth ; through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his ardent mind
Flashed like strong inspiration.”

The studios of Thorwaldsen were in a little street leading out of the Piazza Barberini. They covered a large area of ground, and were crowded with the works of a long and active life. Thither went the young American student with his letter of introduction. When the great Dane had finished reading it, his broad northern nature warmed up ; he took both Crawford’s hands in his, welcomed him in the most friendly manner, told him he had plenty of room in his studios, and that he might come there and study when and as long as he pleased. Crawford gladly accepted the generous offer, and went immediately to work.

Thorwaldsen never permitted his students to copy his own works, but recommended to them the study of the antique, casts from which abounded in his collection. Crawford began to set up a figure in clay from one of these, and after he had worked en-

thusiastically for some hours, the burly figure of the Dane approached him, scanned his effort, and kindly and carefully explained to him the error of his proceeding, telling him the necessity of getting his masses in just proportion and balance before he gave attention to the detail. Crawford wrote some time after: "These few words of instruction from this great artist gave me more insight into my art and were of more service to me than all else put together that I have ever seen and heard."

He lost no time; every hour in the day was occupied in severe study, and most of the hours of the night. He modelled and drew from the nude in the French Academy; apportioned his time so as to visit regularly some work or collection of the antique, improving his taste, enlarging his judgment, and carefully writing out his observations; which were embodied in letters to his sister and his friends. His imagination and invention were already urging him to make compositions. He put them up in clay, but dissatisfied with them, he broke them down and put up others; among the first of these that he finished was a figure which he called "Autumn." He had now been in Rome more than a year, and occupied a corner of Velatti's studio—the famous animal painter—in the Via Margutta. His pecuniary resources were reduced to the last

extreme. Still he did not relax his labor. His poetic soul was bearing him upward; physical want was pressing him downward, but he worked on. Dr. Ruga wrote to Launitz, "Your friend Crawford works incessantly. He takes no relaxation, and if he continues work as he is now doing, his health will suffer." Everybody in any way brought into contact with him was impressed with the same facts. The rumor came up to Florence that there was a young American sculptor in Rome working day and night; that he was struggling against many difficulties, not the least among which was want. His talent and perseverance were beginning to attract attention, and he was willing to labor in his art for any remuneration. During this year, 1837, he modelled in ten weeks seventeen busts, to be put in marble, and also copied in marble the figure of Demosthenes in the Vatican. The sums he received from these works were about the same as the wages of an ordinary day laborer; but, thoroughly in earnest, and actuated by a noble enthusiasm, he knew that excellence was only attained by incessant labor; and, although want lay grimly across his track, gallantly and buoyantly he kept his course.

In a cheerful letter to his sister at this time, when telling of all he was doing, he says:—"You see how I am occupied, and what a diversity of

subjects I am dipping into. There is more truth in the old proverb, 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' than appears at first sight." The aptness of this trite saying indicates the will, the perseverance, the indomitable energy, which impelled him toward success.

Far into the night, for weeks, a lamp was burning in a small room in the Via del Orto di Napoli, now occupied as his studio. One idea filled his mind, which he labored to express. At length his work was completed, and the thought that had not left him day or night, stood in daring relief. Artists saw it, and said it was full of promise—a verdict not against him. Laymen saw it, and pronounced it a success—an opinion, if not so flattering, of much more importance, because there was a market in that direction, and his work was yet in perishable material. His health had suffered; the unremitted toil of mind and body had broken it down; but still his face was set hopefully to the future. Those months of labor and privation were in the past, at which he never turned to look. Although the path was dim and obscure, he had dashed forward triumphantly, and Orpheus, his first work of importance, will be for ever the type of youth and genius. The simple myth, although the statue bears it out, was not all the sculptor meant. He was young and

aspiring, and a shadow of uncertainty hung over the present. The statue, replete with youth, grace, and energy, holding the lyre, bends eagerly forward, the right hand shading the eyes as they try to fathom the uncertain future. It is the artist's aspiration for the ideal—his search for the perfect beauty that forever eludes him.

Through all these trials of distressing want he was uncomplaining, and his cheerful, straightforward manliness began to make friends, among whom, active in the advancement of his interests, was Mr. Greene, the American Consul then in Rome. Charmed by the private character and extraordinary talents of the artist, this gentleman never lost the opportunities, which his official and social position constantly afforded him, of introducing Crawford to distinguished strangers who visited Rome. One day he received a piece of paper, on which was scrawled in tremulous characters, "Come and see me," signed "Crawford." He hastened to his lodgings, where he found him prostrated with a fever of the most malignant type, induced by an overtaxed brain, accompanied by delirium, and succeeded by long prostration. He immediately procured for him the best medical advice, and superintended the nursing himself. As soon as he was enough convalescent to be moved he took him to his own house,

and carefully watched his recovery. Had it not been for this intelligent and friendly vigilance, nothing short of a miracle could have brought Crawford through this sickness; as it was, he slowly recovered; his robust energy was reduced, but the vital and recuperative powers of his mind and body hurried him again to his work.

Before the end of this year, 1839, he had completed two bas-reliefs for the Prince Demidoff of St. Petersburg, one representing Hercules arrested by Diana when in the act of carrying away the golden-horned stag; the other was a group of Centaurs. He also made a group for Mr. Tiffany of Baltimore, whose subject was "Lead us into Life Everlasting," and an ideal statue for Mr. Jonathan Phillips of Boston, which he also repeated for Mr. Tiffany, as he did the "Centurion" for Mr. Paine. Also, busts of Commodore Hull, Sir Charles Vaughan, Mr. Greene, Mr. Sumner, and Mr. Kenyon the English poet. For the "Orpheus" he had no commission, but he had determined to put it in marble, and while he was waiting for the stone to arrive from Carrara, he modelled an equestrian portrait of Washington.

The day of his success was dawning. Mr. Kenyon wrote to a friend:

"If Crawford is sustained in his art and keeps his health he will be the first of modern sculptors; nay, an American

may rival Phidias. He has completed the model of his Orpheus, which some of the best judges, even in the mould compare to the Apollo. Gibson, chary and cold in praise, spoke of it to me as a most extraordinary promise of eminence in the art. I know that Thorwaldsen (himself the greatest of modern names, not even excepting Canova) has expressed the same opinion, and esteems Crawford as his successor in the severe classic style of sculpture. * * * I send you some lithographic engravings of the Orpheus. At Mr. R.'s and elsewhere in London, I have shown the print to the great admiration of all who saw it. But Crawford is struggling for bread.* The moneyed Americans who visit Rome follow names, and as yet know not the rising merit of their countryman. Crawford has the merit of virtuous habits, and an honest, independent spirit. * * * We shall live to see him the most eminent artist of our times. I only wish he were an Englishman. * * *. The most delightful part of his mind is the utter absence of conceit, the independent but natural formation of his views of art, his boldness of opinion, and, withal, his real diffidence, and desire still further to advance his intellect and powers. He is the artist who, and whose works, most struck me in all our journeyings on the Continent: and I write the above, as you will know who know me, from admiration of a man of merit. He lives on a crust, and aid at this critical moment of his career will be every thing to him."

Mr. Charles Sumner, who was in Rome at this time, was impressed in the same way, and his letters were testimonies to the same facts. Thus Thorwaldsen, Gibson, Kenyon, Mr. Charles Sumner and Mr. Greene, all marked out for Crawford a brilliant future. Their conclusions and expressions at that

time, with regard to him, were most prophetic. Sumner, through his letters, had already created an interest for the Orpheus among some of his friends in Boston, and when he returned, which was early in 1840, he completed a subscription to purchase it. In the mean time Crawford was sadly oppressed with poverty, literally living "on a crust," and without a murmur wore away the days of suffering with patient and persevering industry ; driving all his studies forward with an energy that his weakened condition could not yet sustain. It was surprising, even under this system of constant mental application, to see the rapidity with which his intellect and judgment matured. He was persuaded by a friend to visit Florence, where he had not yet been, in order to see the art and artists there, and to secure some necessary relaxation. He had visited Naples the year before, and a letter at that time, expressing his opinions upon what he saw there, and upon art in general, is marked with the hesitation of a man feeling his way in the dark. But one written now from Florence, after familiar acquaintance with men and art in that city, is filled with a broad criticism, which is not only wise and just, but possesses a daguerreotype fidelity that history will prove more and more true.

He left Florence with some feelings of depression,

for there was an air of sunny lightness about the city and in the valley of the Arno that did not quite accord with the difficulties he had to contend with; and the thrift and prosperity of his contemporaries there formed a strong contrast with his own hard struggles. But a true enthusiasm and ambition kept him cheerful. He had never flagged; he would not now; and when he arrived at Rome he found a letter from Sumner containing the order for the Orpheus in marble, to be placed in the Boston Athenæum, and a draft for the money. There came with it, too, the assurance that an interest for his work was growing up at home; and earnest words of friendship, which broke about him like sunshine. The Orpheus was shipped and arrived at its destination. The next mail from Boston to Rome, brought several orders to execute original works. Orders also flowed in from other sources. He had struck the tide of success, and the struggle for bread was over. He now had to do with thought and invention only; the means were afforded, and noble and grand works were to be achieved. His fame spread; distinguished travellers sought him out, and he grew more and more in favor. Other commissions came in—not, however, large enough to satisfy his ambition, but sufficiently so to prove that he was appreciated, and that the first ordeal was passed.

He had large studios fitted up in the Piazza Barberini with sufficient accommodations for his increased requirements. The sudden prosperity which on every side surrounded him stimulated his energies, and while he enjoyed these new conditions, he knew that a true fame was only to be secured through unremitted toil. Fully persuaded of this truth, he never for a moment lost sight of his proper vocation, and society, with all its brilliant allurements, could never seduce him from his art. In 1843 his studios were already crowded with original works, and had become one of the centres of attraction to strangers visiting the studios of Rome.

Through every adversity and temptation, his honor, his integrity, had passed without taint. His character had retained the simple innocence of childhood, and was as pure as it was manly. He had produced an ideal head of Vesta, which as a work of art, became the object of interest that winter in Rome. The Orpheus, an expression of heroic manhood inspired by genius, had secured to him noble and permanent friendships. In the Vesta there was a lovely innocence and beauty which became instrumental in securing to the artist the happiest and most exquisite domestic relations, and which should be as immortal in the romance of affection as the fabled statue of Pygmalion,

In 1844 he came to this country and was married to Miss Louisa Ward, daughter of the late Samuel Ward of this city, and returned to Rome in the course of the same year, carrying with him commissions for some important works. He had already heard of the death of Thorwaldsen, between whom and himself there had existed most genuine friendship. For although he remained but a short time in Thorwaldsen's studio, he visited it frequently, and there continued between them an intimacy and confidence, which, on the part of the Dane, was a feeling that in Crawford he would have a worthy successor, while the American revered Thorwaldsen's great genius and loved him as his master and friend.

From this time forward Crawford's genius began to intensify, and he worked even with more zeal than ever, and with still higher aims of excellence and more perfect success, while his fame was spreading throughout Europe and America. In 1849 he came to the United States, and while on a visit to some relatives at Bordentown, New-Jersey, he read in a newspaper that the City of Richmond had appropriated a specific sum of money to erect a monument to Washington; that competitors without distinction had been invited, and that the designs were to be submitted at a certain date. The subject had been a favorite one with Crawford. He

had made several designs of it, the first one eleven years before in those days of gloomy struggle in the "Orto di Napoli." But his judgment, taste, artistic power and fortune were all changed. The old designs were not appropriate; besides, they were in Rome. He left Bordentown immediately for Boston, and, to the astonishment of artists and laymen, in a few days he had his model completed and forwarded to Richmond. There were many competitors, but the superiority of his design over all the others presented was so apparent that the committee decided in his favor without hesitation. He also received some orders from the United States Government, which were afterwards considerably augmented. He returned to Rome in the following year, 1850, and this magnificent work, requiring years for its completion, was begun. He also modelled a statue of Beethoven to be placed in the Musical Hall in Boston, which, with the statues for the Washington monument, were to be cast in bronze at Munich.

As these works were completed, his studios were crowded by visitors; and when it was announced that the colossal equestrian statue of Washington was ready for exhibition, for days the Piazza Negroni was thronged with royal and civic equipages. The royalists of Europe, republicans from all countries, savans, connoisseurs, wealth, beauty, and fashion,

even the common people of Rome, mingled with the vast concourse, and paid their homage to the genius of the American Sculptor. His growing fame was astonishing, built up as it was, not with decaying and meretricious elements, but with stern industry and an unswerving artistic conscience. His friends, too, could now look back to those days of grim poverty with the consolation that his own rigid adherence to every thing that was gallant and upright had developed his power, and placed him in the first rank of his profession.

In the early part of 1855 the Beethoven was cast in bronze in Munich, and when completed, so grand and noble was its character that it filled the imaginations of that music-loving people with such memories of the great composer that nothing but a public festival would satisfy them. "The artist's permission had been obtained to place it in the concert hall, but the general musical director, Lachner, would not allow the statue to be placed in an ordinary hall, but appointed an especial concert for the 26th of March, 1855—the anniversary of the great master's death—saying, 'That day shall be marked by a fête of art.' A pedestal of six feet in height was prepared, having a background of dark green velvet, supported by gilt columns, and the statue was placed upon it, in the midst of a forest of flowers

and cypresses, and lit by more than a hundred gas lights. The concert hall was filled to overflowing, King Maximilian and the queen attended in full state; and now began the execution of Beethoven's best compositions, by more than three hundred musicians and singers, male and female. Madame Daubach, the first actress, recited a prologue in verse, written by M. Dingelstedt, the director of the theater. The splendor of the fête surpassed any thing ever given in Munich. The king remarked to a gentleman present, 'I only regret that this masterpiece of art should not remain in Munich.'" When the statue was placed in the Hall in Boston, another festival was given, at which Mr. W. W. Story, himself a sculptor and musician, read an original poem, eulogizing the success with which the artist had rendered the great characteristics of the great composer.

Crawford's name had now become familiar in Munich, and when the "Washington" was cast, the verdict upon its merits was unanimous; he was made an honorary member of the Royal Academies of Munich and St. Petersburg, and during the year the Academy of St. Mark at Florence conferred upon him the same distinction. In such esteem was the "Washington" held by the workmen in the foundry, and so entirely had the artist won their regard, that when it left Munich they would not allow the

ordinary laborers to touch the cases in which it was packed, or put it upon the conveyance, but did all that themselves, while the roads and bridges were, by order of the king, made free for it to pass over. The same good fortune attended it on this side of the Atlantic, for when it reached Richmond the enthusiastic citizens drew it to its destined place in Capitol Square.

Crawford's genius differed from his contemporaries in almost every respect. His compositions were the result of a mental process as rapid as thought itself. His execution was surprising; indeed, it had become a proverb among the sculptors and other artists in Rome, when they were told he had made a new group, that he pitched his clay together with a trowel, struck it first with his right hand and then with his left, turned it thrice upon its pedestal, and it was finished. With this wonderful facility of execution he combined the highest grace and classic power. He was not a sculptor merely because he had a talent for the mechanical use of tools, and thought marble a beautiful material upon which to display it, but because he was a poet, and his mind was so filled with the forms of beauty, purity, and strength, in such clear distinctness and reality, that he had no peace day or night, until they were wrought into actual and imperishable form. No

other language was adequate to express his thoughts. He was a natural sculptor. So active was his creative faculty, and so fertile his invention, that he could only make way for new creations by incessant labor, and as quickly as one work was finished another was begun. His perceptions were acute and exact, his powers of memory prodigious. His fancy was graceful and dignified; his character bold, and thus his scholarship was thorough and truthful. Under this rare combination, the rudest sketch, no less than the most elaborate work, was stamped with those evidences which belong alone to genius.

From the number and variety of his works, together with the rapidity of their execution, it might be inferred that he did not bestow upon them the elaboration which sculpture requires. But in a careful examination of their intrinsic merit, if such deficiencies are discovered, they are the results of two facts with which he was perfectly acquainted. First, that the imagination and other high faculties of the mind, when educated and intelligent, are affected by the very reverse of those qualities which are merely visual, microscopic and mechanical; and, secondly, that his invention was so fertile, his thoughts and fancy so teeming with forms of grandeur and beauty, that the necessity to create new works was imperative. Some such charges were made against Michel

Angelo—how groundlessly, history is perpetually demonstrating. Does it ever occur to a cultivated mind that the Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel are wanting in finish? Still the works of Carlo Dolci have many admirers, and Michel Angelo has left the indisputable proof of his ability to lose in monotonous softness all traces of other character, and has showed his contempt for it in a solitary bas-relief in the Uffizzi gallery at Florence. Crawford also, in some of his works, carried tenderness and elaboration into the superlative degree. In the group of "The Children in the Wood," nothing is omitted that belongs to the story. The shoes, the little birds and leaves, are all wrought out with the utmost truthfulness, while the touching pathos of the sleeping children is consistent and exquisite. But we may safely assert that there is not a work in sculpture, ancient or modern, that surpasses in elaboration the portrait bust of Mrs. Crawford, executed in 1846. Every attribute of the best art is retained in its fullest expression. Intellectuality, dignity, and womanly sweetness, glow with the artist's skill. The effect of the whole is classical, preserving in almost faultless symmetry the minutest individuality of character. This is carried with studied particularity into the laces and flowers. Their ornate and delicate tracery is so subdued as to heighten

the imposing perfection of the work. In the entire range of sculptured portraiture it has neither superior nor equal.

It is not, however, by these qualities that succeeding generations will estimate the works of Crawford. Admirable as they are, they belong to a lower plane of labor. It is the difference between Phidias and Praxiteles—the creative and constructive power of the ideal, and the patient finish of a sluggish invention. His superiority is shown in the universality of his subjects, and the originality of their conception and treatment. It is remarkable how the course of study he adopted secured to him the true development of his faculties. His first studies were naturally among the celebrated antiques. This led him to make most of his earliest compositions of a classical character in order to perfect his knowledge of anatomy. As he acquired more skill and mastery over his tools and material, he selected his subjects from the Bible and New Testament, familiarizing himself with treatment of more complicated draperies, preparing for the most difficult works; so that when the large orders from Government were tendered to him, he was competent to accept and execute them with equal honor to himself and the nation. His works naturally classify themselves into three divisions. First: The Mythological, including the

Orpheus, Genius of Mirth, the Muse, Autumn, Cupid, Flora, Io, Peri, Apollo, Homer, Diana, Vesta, Sappho, the Archer, Paris presenting the apple to Venus, Mercury and Psyche, Hebe and Ganymede, Jupiter and Psyche, Psyche Found, Nymph and Satyr, a series of four bas-reliefs, Boy and Goat, &c.

His Scriptural compositions were Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, David before Saul, the Shepherds and Wise Men before Christ, a group of twenty-four figures; Christ disputing with the Doctors, twelve figures; Christ ascending from the Tomb, and Christ raising Jairus's daughter, the Daughter of Herodias, Repose in Egypt, Eve tempted, Eve with Cain and Abel, Lead us into Life Everlasting, a single figure of Christ, Christ blessing little Children, and Christ at the Well of Samaria. This, however, is not a complete list.

But, notwithstanding the high excellence of his earlier productions, his genius only found its full scope in works of history and allegory, of which, in all, there are more than thirty; and the latest of these are the best, for the reason that the subjects brought him at once into the vital contemporary history of his country and excited his patriotism.

The Virginia monument is nobly conceived. The colossal statue of Washington, including the horse, is 25 feet high. The pedestal rests upon a star-

shaped elevation with six points, upon which stand colossal statues of Lee, Mason, Nelson, and Patrick Henry, who, with his arms raised and extended, is in the act of speaking, while Jefferson, in an attitude of earnest contemplation, holds a pen, with the Declaration of Independence. These figures, which are to be in bronze, excited great admiration when they were exhibited in Rome.

The figures for one of the pediments on the extension of the Capitol at Washington are allegorical, and filled with historic interest. In the centre stands a figure of Liberty, with appropriate symbols. At her right, a soldier in Continental uniform is drawing his sword from his scabbard, as if to defend the rights of the statesman who sits near him, absorbed in deep thought. Then two youths are coming forward to serve cheerfully in their country's cause; next, the schoolmaster is teaching a lad; and the last figure on this side is the mechanic. Upon the left is, first, the pioneer or backwoodsman, who, with an axe, is clearing the forests, emerging from which is the hunter, with his dogs and game. The next is the figure of the Indian, broken and bowed before the progress of the civilized white man. Seated by his side are a squaw and child, and near them are the graves of their fathers. These are all full statues. The figure of Liberty in the centre of the

pediment, and those nearest to her on the right and left, are colossal. They are conceived in such simplicity, and the story is so clearly and forcibly told, that even a child may at once detect the meaning. This was a characteristic of Crawford. While he maintained in theory and asserted in practice the most exalted principles of art, he seized the idea in all its relations, with a broad and universal significance, which made his meaning clear at once. He maintained, in common with the great masters, that the office of art was not to gratify the senses or to delight the fancy, but to enlarge and enlighten the understanding, by communicating to it ideas of simple incident, profound sentiment and universal truth.

The designs for the bronze door of the Capitol, with their superb, gigantic figures of Law and Justice, were conceived in the same spirit. But the most sublime of all his creations is the colossal embodiment of America. It is the figure of a woman erect with majesty, robed to the feet, and swayed with an indescribable grace. The face is filled with pride, triumph and magnanimity; yet the daring and power which pervade it make it stern and awful. It seems like a concentration of the Phidian Jupiter and the Moses of Buonarotti, comprising the omnipotence of the god with the unrelenting decrees of the prophet. The head is covered with a helmet,

on the crest of which cowers an eagle, whose plumage, sloping backward, blends with masses of richly-braided hair. The right hand rests upon the hilt of a sword, the point of which is poised at her feet. The left hand holds a wreath and rests on a shield embossed with stars. It is to be cast in bronze and to stand on the summit of the dome. This is the work that received the last touches from his hand, and as it is pre-eminently his grandest conception, it is fitting that it should stand as the climax of his fame.

From his first essays as a student to his last labors, he was actuated by the most exalted desire of greater and greater perfection in his art. He sought to increase the renown of his country, both by augmenting its treasures and perpetuating the history and spirit of its institutions. His own ideas upon this subject, expressed in a letter to a friend in 1843, are worthy of record here. He says:

“I have commenced a small statue of Mirth for Mr. Hicks of New York. The model will be completed in about a month. It is a boy of seven or eight years, dancing in great glee, and tinkling a pair of cymbals, the music of which seems to amuse him exceedingly. The sentiment is joyousness throughout. It is evident no thought of the future troubles his young mind. And he may consider himself very fortunate in being made in marble, for thus his youth remains without change.

"I intend commencing seven bas-reliefs, which will contain compositions representing the great poets. I have Homer, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, and Milton, and an ideal arrangement of Apollo with the horse Pegasus. I may possibly add Shakespeare, but I think of reserving him to be placed in another series intended for the Tragic Poets. * * * I have composed many other things, and I regret that I have not a hundred hands to keep pace with the workings of the mind. The most important of these will be, perhaps, illustrations of the whole of Ovid. I intend engraving these; for to model them would require too much time, unless they were ordered. They will be simple drawings in outline, composed with a sculptured feeling, in such a way that they might be modelled in bas-relief, and still preserve the harmony of composition, so necessary in Art. I have often thought that such works as these might be ordered in plaster if not in marble. The expense would be but one-half, probably, and they would answer every purpose connected with the ornament of our literary institutions. Many persons think it absolutely necessary that all works of sculpture should be in marble. If it is possible, so much the better: but, after all, casts give to the instructed mind quite as much pleasure; and the reputation of the artist may be placed as well upon fine impressions of his works *in gesso* as though they were executed in more durable material. Witness the 'Triumph of Alexander,' the great work of modern times. It was ordered to be made in plaster of Paris originally. Besides, we have the immortal casts of the antique throughout the world. I do not mean to say that I should desire an order for a statue in plaster, nor for a single *bas-relief*; but an order for a series of compositions I should consider a most fortunate consummation, and devoutly to be wished."

In another part of his letter Crawford says :

“I look to the formation of a pure school of Art in our glorious country. We have surpassed already the Republics of Greece in our political institutions, and I see no reason why we should not attempt to approach their excellence in the fine arts, which, as much as any thing, has secured undying fame to Grecian genius.”

He lived to fulfil these desires in the Government commissions, of which he left models from which the works will be completed in enduring bronze and marble, according to his designs. In Rome, his establishment consisted of twelve grand studios, and for the last six years the incessant clang of mallet and chisel was ringing from a hundred busy hands “to keep pace with the workings of his mind.” We may estimate that he spent in active labor about nineteen years out of the twenty-two from the time he first arrived in Rome till his death, allowing one year for his last illness, and two years for his visits to this country, mainly made for relaxation and to recruit his health. This is an average of more than three finished works, many of them colossal, for each year ; or in all about sixty that were finished. He also left about fifty sketches in plaster, and designs of various kinds. This industry and executive achievement, in the same space of time, has no parallel, and it is only reasonable to

assume that had he enjoyed the full command of his mental and physical health which favored the great Scandinavian to the age of seventy-four, stimulated and sustained by the surprising growth of artistic culture and demand for art in the United States, he would have secured a celebrity unknown to the history of Art.

And, indeed, between Thorwaldsen and Crawford there was a singular and touching connection, in some respects so remarkable, that it is well worth a moment's attention.

A poor young Dane, of fine presence and gallant nature, left Copenhagen with the determination to become a sculptor, and after a perilous voyage passed the straits of Gibraltar, and through the Mediterranean Sea to the Bay of Naples, whence he came to Rome, and became the renowned sculptor of the age.

A young countryman of the sculptor's, Launitz, who had worked in his studio at Rome, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to a strange country, and set up his business in New York. At the time of his arrival, an American lad, with peering curiosity, was watching the colors and forms of various objects in nature, walking up and down the streets, looking at pictures, and whatsoever there was of Art to attract and fascinate his young mind. After many

difficulties and delays, Launitz becomes the boy's tutor ; fills his mind with anecdotes of art, and aids in sending him to Rome. This youth, now grown to manhood, leaves these shores as Thorwaldsen did those of Denmark, and after a like perilous voyage through the same straits, along the African coasts, arrives in Italy, and becomes the pupil, friend, and finally successor, to the noble-hearted Dane. But here the resemblance ends ; and in the hour of his maturing fame, in the full development of his powers, when the people of both Continents are watching his career with delight, by the Providence of God he was removed from the sphere of his labors, and the dust has already settled upon the implements of his Art.

Thus far we have considered the public career of Crawford, and now some personal recollections may not be out of place.

I arrived in Rome in October, 1845. Among the first persons who called on me was Crawford. I had never seen him before, and was forcibly struck with his appearance and manner. He was very cordial, welcomed me to Rome, and said it was the true place for an artist. While he talked I watched his marked and handsome features, particularly his eyes, which were large, blue and expressive. His figure was straight and muscular, indicating almost

robust health. There was a slight nervousness in his manner, as if to say, "Well, I must bid you good morning and go to work;" and occasionally a shade of expression on his features of coldness and dissatisfaction, which never entirely disappeared, even when his mind relaxed in the society of his most intimate friends. During the winter of 1847 and '48 I was a great deal at his house. Some of the pleasantest hours I had in Rome were passed there. The drawing or sitting room was large; the walls were hung with dark maroon paper, and covered with rare and curious gems of art. A wood fire was always burning in the open fireplace, and "Cato," a large black dog, stretched before it, dozed with his head on his paws. Mr. George S. Hillard, Hon. Franklin Dexter, Mr. George W. Curtis, Mr. William W. Story and Mr. Charles C. Perkins were constant evening visitors, and the hours passed away in music and conversation, or some other pleasant entertainment. Many such evenings were passed in the kind and agreeable society of the host and hostess. Crawford had lived in Rome so long that he had made a large number of Italian friends. He spoke the language perfectly, and they were proud both of his artistic and social position.

When the revolution broke out in 1848, and the spirit of Republicanism spread over Europe, like a

flame over the prairie, the Civic Guard was enrolled in Rome, and they insisted that Crawford should join it as an officer. When he appeared in his uniform, some of his countrymen questioned his right as an American citizen to identify himself with the Romans. He replied that he had property at stake in Rome, and that if he had not, to be the defender of liberty there would not alienate him from his own country. One day, shortly after this, I was to ride with Mr. Story beyond the walls of the city. It was early in March—one of those perfect Italian days; the air as balmy as our own June, the sky serene, and the Campagna already covered with violets. In the Piazza di Spagna we met Crawford and invited him to join us; but he excused himself, and asked where we were going; Story said to Monte Mario. "Well," he replied, with a boyish jocularly, "I'm going to Mount Guard." There was an element of unaffected cheerfulness in his character which made it refreshing and delightful, and a vein of drollery and love of sport which relieved the earnest and serious cast of his mind. There was no jealousy in his nature, and it was entirely free from detraction. He was loved by many of his professional brethren, and by his manly independence, unbiased appreciation and uniform politeness, held the respect and esteem of all. His social qualities were admirable.

No greater proof is needed of this than is shown in the number of his friends, and the manner in which they clung to him, no less in his struggles than in his successes. Circumstances excluded him in early life from the society of influential persons, and at the age of twenty-one the most important person that he knew was his employer Mr. Launitz. But once abroad in the atmosphere of Art, and in contact with persons whose cultivation was equal to the comprehension of his character, he made friendships which held as firmly to his memory as they did to him in life; and that coldness of manner which sometimes seemed like indifference toward those who desired on be on equal and kind terms with him, must find its explanation in the fact that till within the last few years he chafed under an unsatisfied ambition, desiring to achieve larger works than had yet been ordered, and with his restless mind constantly fixed upon the future, he sometimes lost sight of the present, seeming indifferent where really he did not feel so. I remember being puzzled by this same trait of his manner till I met him in 1850, in Broadway, immediately after his arrival from Virginia. The expression on his face was that of perfect happiness, and his unconstrained and cordial greeting fairly electrified me. On my remarking how well he looked, he said, "I feel well; I have received the Virgini

commission, and it is the first real chance I have ever had to do what I want to." He now had the opportunity to secure a permanent fame, and after this I never observed the old peculiarity of his manner. I am entirely satisfied that it was not result of coldness or indifference to his friends. Indeed, I know that he was constantly endeavoring, in the days of his prosperity, to pay with double interest the obligations which early adversity had forced him to assume. One instance of this is connected with the bust of Mr. Sumner which he modelled in 1839. It remained in plaster for several years, but one day Mr. Sumner's mother was surprised with delight at receiving it in marble, with a simple note from the artist, asking her to accept it as a token of his gratitude for the friendship of her son.

Mr. Charles C. Perkins, a man distinguished for genuine love for, and accomplishments in, the fine arts, had been a true friend to Crawford. Desiring to present to the Music Hall of Boston a bronze statue of Beethoven, he commissioned Crawford to prepare the model. He laid by every thing, and entered with enthusiasm upon the work. When it was completed he refused any remuneration, insisting that his labor should be regarded not only as his contribution to an object in which he shared the interest of his friend, but also as a recognition of

the faithful friendship that subsisted between them. Many more instances could be cited to prove this trait of his character ; but an extract from one of his letters, bearing the date of April 22, 1844, will express it more fully. He says :

“ You were my firm, fast friend in the hour of adversity, and you will be so now, after the storm has passed away. I would offer to you the fullest expression of gratitude that ever left a warm heart. I would convince you that I am no changeling, but words aid me little in doing this ; so, —, be careful how you extend your hand upon my arrival or I shall be likely to carry it off with me. Remember me to — and —, also —, should you see them. They are men after my own feelings. You make a glorious quartetto, and sing admirably together. I am anxiously preparing myself to enter without a discordant note, and so help along the music. God bless you, and believe me ever your affectionate friend.”

His domestic nature was ample and lovely. During all those early years of uncomplaining want, his letters to his sister were filled with the tenderest, confiding affection. She knew how he was suffering, and willing to make any sacrifice for him, offered him the small sums that she could save from her own supply, but he positively refused to accept them, and wrote : “ I am a man, and I will fight my own way through.”

In a letter from Leghorn, immediately after his arrival, he says :

"I have taken a bold step, and if ambition and perseverance in my studies will place me where I so much wish to be, I shall not regret the movement I am making. I am determined either to be at the top of the ladder or buried under it. I know I am venturing much ; it is what few have dared to do. Nearly all young artists have proceeded on this road protected and encouraged by some kind patron, who had extended his hand to them previous to their departure from home, and who placed them in a state of independence upon their arrival in the School of Art. *I am alone* ; and do not think me vain when I say, that I believe my fortitude is sufficient to surmount all the difficulties which may be in my path to eminence."

How nobly he merited his success ! As a husband and parent, his relations were beautiful. The romance of his courtship and marriage grew in after life into a more transfigured and dignified affection ; while his children had in him a playmate, no less than a protector. And thus he found at his own fireside that light and cheerfulness, and devotion, so indispensable to a mind goaded by ambition and jaded by toil.

In the Spring of 1856 he came to this country, to make further arrangements relating to his State and Government commissions. Having completed them, he returned in the Autumn to Rome, leaving his wife and children here, and accompanied by his devoted sister. While on the voyage, his eyes troubled him, becoming very sensitive to the light and

slightly inflamed. Believing it to be only temporary debility of the lid, he thought very little of it. But by the time he reached Rome his left eye had become painful, and assumed an aggravated and angry look. He went energetically to work, but the difficulty increased, and his medical advisers persuaded him to suspend his daily work, which he did reluctantly. But up to the last hour of his sojourn in Rome, he went the rounds of his studios once or twice a day, giving directions to his workmen and urging forward his great undertakings. A surgical examination was made, but finding no relief, he concluded to go to Paris and secure the most efficient aid that science could supply.

He was accompanied from Rome by Mr. Terry, whose indispensable assistance was so delicately tendered, that Crawford regarded him rather as a travelling companion than a nurse. After thorough investigation, the Paris surgeons pronounced the malady to be a cancerous tumor, behind the eye, but rooted in the brain, and thus utterly discouraged the idea of his recovery. His wife, who had been summoned from America without his knowledge, still hopeful of the best, concealed from him this decision, and from Paris they went to London, allured by the prospect of specific treatment, but he had passed beyond the limit of human benefit.

Through those long succeeding months of physical suffering, dark agonizing days and darker nights, no murmur escaped his lips. His busy mind still planned new works, and notwithstanding the torture which racked his spirit, and the sickness which weakened his energies, he still believed, with almost youthful enthusiasm, he would soon be well, and again at work in his Roman studio. Yet, day by day, hour by hour, the fatal disease was drying up the fountains of his life. Still, pointing upward and onward, the Angel of Hope lighted, though dimly, his dark and downward path, and on the 1st of September, two months before his death, they told him he must die. At these words his whole frame relaxed, his hands fell listlessly in his lap, he bowed his head, and with a tone of abiding faith and resignation, said, "God's will be done."

In the Theatre of Copenhagen, brilliant with light, crowded with the gayest people of the city, sat the venerable and fame-crowned sculptor of Denmark, surrounded by devoted friends. In the midst of one of Beethoven's grandest symphonies, while its sounding harmonies filled the great space from floor to ceiling, the old Thorwaldsen's head sank upon his breast, and through the gayety, and glow, and the mysterious music, his immortal spirit passed from earth to heaven. And thus ended *his* long and successful life.

Not such was the end of his illustrious pupil. But from the closing scene in the history of Crawford, characterized as it was, through all its tortures, by heroic resignation, unwavering faith, and Christian virtue, we will not lift the veil. His name is written on the roll of famous men. He has a place amid the few who have accomplished noble works. But while we mourn his loss, honoring him for all his excellent qualities, and while the nation whose history he has enriched cherishes his renown, we feel that he is not ours alone. Genius, like air and light, is the gift of God, for the benefit of all his children ; and the works of Thomas Crawford, like those of Phidias and Michel Angelo, may awaken thought and emotion long after the political glories of the Republic which claims him as her son shall have passed away.

At the regular monthly meeting of the *Century*, held at the Club House, on Saturday evening, February 6th, 1858, the President, Hon Gulian C. Verplanck, in the chair, and a very large number of members present, Mr. George Wm. Curtis offered the following resolutions :

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the Century Club are hereby presented to our fellow member, Thomas Hicks, for his eloquent, just, and sympathetic eulogy upon the late Thomas Crawford, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.

RESOLVED, That the President name a Committee of three to superintend the publication.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the President appointed Messrs. G. W. Curtis, A. M. Cozzens, and Edward Slosson as the Committee.

Mr. Curtis introduced the resolutions by saying :

MR. PRESIDENT : I rise to offer some resolutions in reference to the eulogy upon the late Thomas Crawford, recently read before the Club by our friend Mr. Hicks.

It was not my good fortune to hear that simple, manly, faithful, and touching story of the sculptor's life and works, but I was one of the many thousands all over the land, who felt, as they read it, that the genius which guides its author's pencil in the service of art, did not desert his pen in the service of friendship.

We may all, sir, have a different estimate of the genius of Crawford, and of the position to which he is entitled among sculptors, but none of us can deny that his great talent, and the circumstances which were so adequately stated in the eulogy, had conspired to make him the most conspicuous of American artists, since Allston. And it was therefore peculiarly proper that a club of his countrymen, which has its origin in the generous instincts and humane sympathies from which art springs, should especially honor the memory of the artist. It is a serious duty for all of us who recognize the national importance of art and letters, to take care that the heroes of art and letters are honored as other heroes are ; and I confess I should have gladly seen the whole city uniting in the commemoration of the other evening. If we bury with pomp and praise the statesman who devises great designs, and the soldier who executes them ; if the city follows the bier of some General who fought bravely in Mexico ; or sets funeral flags for an English soldier, falling for his country in a distant land—and these honors are surely both just and natural—so should it regard with equal regret, and mark with similar respect, the death of that other patriot, the artist.

A great national life springs from faith in noble ideas. Skepticism of generous principles precedes the decay of every state, and no man is a truer benefactor to his country, than he who fosters the national faith in ideas, by giving to thoughts of immortal beauty forms of imperishable grace. If Pericles were a patriot when his stern and persuasive tongue led the city against its will, not less a patriot was his

friend Phidias who reared the lofty statue in whose shadow the orator spoke, and which gave the richest meaning to his words.

Now in this country, where we need nothing more than to be constantly reminded that rich men and politicians, and a flourishing trade, are not enough to secure the best national results, it was hardly to be expected that the public at large would feel sufficient interest in such an event as a sculptor's death, to justify a more public ceremony. But for that reason, it is the more incumbent upon the Club which invited this eulogy, and which is an association of men of every pursuit, whose common bond is sympathy with liberal and ennobling arts, to bear testimony of its faith before the world, by sanctioning the publication of this valuable contribution to the history of American art.

I will not detain you, sir. I would willingly have said a few words of my personal recollections of Crawford ; but his grave is closed, and I shall not ask you to linger by it longer. Only let me say this, that while his life approved him to the world as an artist, it was his death that set the seal to the man. Character is deeper than genius ; life is better than art ; and when I see Crawford, having climbed through doubt and disappointment to that height in which his position was recognized with pride at home, and acknowledged with admiration abroad—with his face of blooming manhood set toward those alluring laurels, the glorious incentives of an equally glorious toil—with youth, hope, love, and ambition smiling upon him as his foot was raised in the forward race—and then mark the cold hand

suddenly laid upon his shoulder, and hear the chill whisper breathed into his soul, "canst thou also forbear"—and then behold him, not without natural human regrets and longings, tranquilly resigning the great prizes of an earthly future, and breathing away his life in the arms of an unwearied love ; I cannot think that his work is unachieved ; I cannot think that such a man dies prematurely. For his patient death crowns his busy life ; and no man dies untimely who dies lamented like him : since to die lamented is to have been loved ; and to have been so loved, is better than to have built the Parthenon with all its statues.

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